

CHAPTER XIII FROM

SIENA TO ROME

" Prega la aomma eterna Bontk dl Dio, che ne faccia quello che ela sno onore e salute dell'anima; e epeclalmente ora, che sono per andare a Roma per compire la volonti dl Cristo crocifisao e del vicario suo."—St. Catherine, Letter 316 (165).

AT the first rumour of a misunderstanding between the Sacred College and the Pope, Catherine had addressed an impassioned letter from Florence to Pedro de Luna : " with desire of seeing you a firm column, set in the garden of Holy Church, freed from that self-love which weakens every creature that has reason." "I seem to have heard," she wrote, "that discord is arising over there between Christ on earth and his disciples, from which I receive intolerable sorrow, for the mere dread that I have of heresy, which I fear greatly may come because of my sins. And, therefore, I beseech you, by that glorious and precious blood which was shed with such great fire of love, never to sever yourself from virtue and from your head. All other things— external war and other tribulations—would seem to us less than a straw or a shadow in comparison with this." ¹

Catherine had returned to Siena a few days before the solemn denunciation of Urban's usurpation of the papacy, at Anagni on August 9, announced the imminence of a schism in the Church. From her native city, she now beheld with unutterable anguish what men called the rending of the coat of Christ that was without seam. There can be no doubt that she heard only the extreme Urbanist version of what had happened, and she accepted it unreservedly with all the passionate fervour of her. soul. ^{£C}O men, not men, but rather demons visible," she cries, apostrophizing the cardinals, " how does the inordinate love that you have set on the dunghill of your own bodies, and on the

¹ Letter 293 (26). A better text is in the Palatine MS. 56, from which I quote.